



***United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York***

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**LEADER OF A VIOLENT CRACK COCAINE DISTRIBUTION  
ORGANIZATION SENTENCED TO LIFE IN FEDERAL PRISON**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that XAVIER WILLIAMS was sentenced to life imprisonment in Manhattan federal court late Friday for his role as leader of a violent drug-trafficking organization. The sentence, imposed by United States District Judge NAOMI REICE BUCHWALD, follows WILLIAMS's conviction, after a three-week trial, of racketeering, racketeering conspiracy, attempted murder, firearms, and narcotics charges.

The attempted murder charges stemmed from the October 1995 conspiracy to kill Victor Mercado, a/k/a "Pete," who was shot multiple times in the Bronx, New York. Two relatives of XAVIER WILLIAMS, Elijah Bobby Williams and Michael Williams, were previously sentenced to life terms in prison for their participation in XAVIER WILLIAMS's organization, including their roles in the murders of three individuals in Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania, in February 1996. XAVIER WILLIAMS, a/k/a "X, a/k/a

"Xavier Torres," was arrested and charged by federal authorities in September 2000.

The evidence at trial established that XAVIER WILLIAMS was the leader of a violent enterprise, the Torres Organization, so-called because Torres was the name the WILLIAMSES used to hide their true identity while selling crack cocaine in the Pittsburgh area. The evidence further established that the Torres Organization distributed narcotics from the Bronx to the Pittsburgh area, and that members of the organization, including XAVIER WILLIAMS, relied upon acts of violence - including the attempted murder of Victor Mercado for stealing drugs from the WILLIAMSES and the execution-style murder of the three men in Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania, a small community next to Pittsburgh - to maintain and increase their positions in the enterprise.

According to the evidence at trial, the members of the Torres Organization used leased vehicles, some outfitted with secret compartments, to transport narcotics, cash drug proceeds and firearms from the Bronx to the Pittsburgh area. In addition, at least one of these vehicles, belonging to XAVIER WILLIAMS, was outfitted with countersurveillance devices, including rotating license plates and high intensity rear halogen lights to blind pursuers. The narcotics would then be sold to customers in the Pittsburgh area for double and triple their New York value.

The jury convicted XAVIER WILLIAMS of attempting to murder Victor Mercado to enhance his position in the Torres Organization, and with using guns in the course of the enterprise. The testimony at trial showed that Mercado, an associate and friend of WILLIAMS, stole drugs from the WILLIAMS family.

Mr. GARCIA said these convictions are the result of a long-term investigation by the United States Attorney's Office, the Allegheny County Police Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and the New York City Police Department. Mr. GARCIA praised the outstanding efforts of these agencies, particularly the Allegheny County Police Department, members of which have remained committed to this prosecution since 1996.

Assistant United States Attorneys RICHARD C. DADDARIO, HELEN V. CANTWELL and GLEN G. MCGORTY are in charge of the prosecution.

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